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OREGON SLOUGH, OREG.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING,

WITH A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, REPORT ON
REEXAMINATION OF OREGON SLOUGH, OREG.

JANUARY 15, 1916.—Referred to the Committee on Rivers and Harbors and
ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, January 14, 1916.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit herewith a letter from the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, dated 12th instant, together with copies of reports from Lieut. Col. Jay J. Morrow, Corps of Engineers, and the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, dated June 7, 1915, and June 29, 1915, on reexamination of Oregon Slough, Oreg., made in compliance with the provisions of the river and harbor act approved March 4, 1915.

Very respectfully,

LINDLEY M. GARRISON,
Secretary of War.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS,
Washington, January 12, 1916.

From: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army.
To: The Secretary of War.
Subject: Reexamination of Oregon Slough, Oreg.

1. Under authority contained in section 14 of the river and harbor act approved March 4, 1915, there are submitted herewith for transmission to Congress report dated June 7, 1915, by Lieut. Col.

Jay J. Morrow, Corps of Engineers, and report dated June 29, 1915, by the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, relative to the project for improvement of Oregon Slough, Oreg.

2. The project for improvement of Oregon Slough was adopted by the act of July 25, 1912, and provides for dredging a channel 200 feet wide and 20 feet deep at extreme low water from deep water in Columbia River near the foot of Hayden Island to deep water in the slough just above the Portland Union Stock Yards, a distance of nearly 4 miles, at an estimated cost of \$100,000 and \$5,000 per annum for maintenance, one-half the cost of construction to be paid by local interests. By reason of having available a large and efficient dredge, the project was completed in March, 1914, at a total cost of \$49,112.60, of which sum the local interests furnished one-half. The port of Portland now contemplates assuming the improvement and maintenance of the slough and therefore the district officer is of opinion that the project should be abandoned by the United States. The division engineer and the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors concur in this opinion.

3. After due consideration of the above-mentioned reports, I concur in the views of the district officer, the division engineer, and the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, and therefore recommend that legislation be enacted authorizing the abandonment of the project for the improvement of Oregon Slough, Oreg.

DAN C. KINGMAN,
Chief of Engineers, United States Army.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS.

[Third indorsement.]

BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS,
June 29, 1915.

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY:

1. This report on Oregon Slough, Oreg., is submitted under authority of that portion of section 14 of the act of March 4, 1915, which reads "and the Chief of Engineers is directed to make a report upon any other projects, river or harbor, the further improvement of which under present conditions is undesirable or in which modifications of the plans or projects should be made."

2. The existing project, adopted by the act of July 25, 1912, provides for dredging a channel 200 feet wide and 20 feet deep at extreme low water from deep water in the Columbia River to a point above the Portland Union Stock Yards, on the slough, a distance of about 4 miles, at a total cost of \$100,000, with \$5,000 annually for maintenance, local interests cooperating to the extent of paying one-half of the first cost. The project was completed March 17, 1914, at a cost of \$49,112.60, one-half of which was contributed by local interests.

3. Since completion the channel has shoaled considerably, and it is probable that maintenance would cost much more than originally estimated. Owing to the closing down of a large sawmill located on the slough commerce seems to have declined.

4. It appears that the port of Portland expects to assume charge of the improvement of this channel, as was anticipated at the time the preliminary examination report recommending it was submitted. In view of this fact, the district officer recommends that the project for Oregon Slough be abandoned, and the division engineer concurs.

5. The port of Portland has for a number of years been assisting in the work of improving the Columbia and Willamette Rivers below Portland, and it appears that it now proposes to take over the improvement of Oregon Slough. It is therefore no longer necessary for the United States to continue this project, and the board recommends legislation authorizing its abandonment.

For the board:

W. M. BLACK,
Colonel, Corps of Engineers,
Senior Member of the Board.

REEXAMINATION OF OREGON SLOUGH, OREG.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE, FIRST DISTRICT,
Portland, Oreg., June 7, 1915.

From: The District Engineer Officer.

To: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army
(Through the Division Engineer).

Subject: Report on Oregon Slough, Oreg.

1. In compliance with instructions dated Office Chief of Engineers, May 1, 1915, I have to submit the following report as to the advisability of abandoning or modifying the existing project for improvement of Oregon Slough, Oreg.

2. The project for the improvement of Oregon Slough was adopted by act of July 25, 1912, and is set forth in House Document No. 712, Sixty-second Congress, second session. It provides for dredging a channel 200 feet wide and 20 feet deep at extreme low water, from deep water near the foot of Hayden Island to deep water in the slough just above the Portland Union Stock Yards, a distance of nearly 4 miles. The estimate of the first cost of the work was \$100,000, one-half of which was to be contributed by the local interests. It was estimated that for maintenance \$5,000 annually would be required, preferably in the form of a biennial appropriation of \$10,000.

3. Dredging was commenced on March 3, 1913, at the upper end of the cut, with the 30-inch pipe line dredge *Willamette* which was rented for the purpose from the port of Portland, at \$350 per day of 24 hours' actual work. Work for the season was suspended on June 3, 1913, after 1,010,100 cubic yards had been excavated, and 15,630 feet of the channel had been dredged. The dredging was resumed July 17, 1913, but after excavating only 15,000 cubic yards the dredge was transferred to the main river for the port's regular work. The dredge was again put to work on the Oregon Slough channel December 24, 1913, where she was operated until March 17, 1914, the project being completed at that date, after about 1,900,000

cubic yards had been excavated, of which 570,000 cubic yards had been deposited by the summer freshet of 1913, in the 3 miles of cut that had been excavated to the projected depth the previous season.

4. On account of having been able to secure the large and efficient dredge *Willamette* at the rental of \$350, the cost per cubic yard of material excavated was only $2\frac{3}{4}$ cents, and the total cost of executing the project only \$49,112.60, of which sum the local interests furnished one half and have since been released from further obligation.

5. Since the completion of the project no work of maintenance has been undertaken. Although no survey has been made of Oregon Slough since the completion of the project, it is understood that soundings taken by the local interests indicate that nearly all of the cut has shoaled from 2 to 8 feet, caused by the deposits of the freshet of the summer of 1914. Another freshet is now passing, which will doubtless add to the shoaling. It is estimated that to restore the channel to its projected low water depth of 20 feet and width of 200 feet would require the removal of at least 700,000 cubic yards, and would cost about \$20,000, and it would appear reasonable to suppose that a like expense for maintenance would be required at each maintenance operation, a charge considerably in excess of that estimated at the time of the adoption of the project.

6. On November 5, 1912, an initiative act was submitted to and carried by the legal voters of Multnomah County, Oreg., to amend former laws so as to authorize the port of Portland, among other things, to improve the waters of Oregon Slough. Section 6078 of the amended act authorized the port of Portland "to make and maintain in said Willamette River and in Oregon Slough, in said harbor, for such width and length, and as for all or such part of said harbor as it may deem necessary or convenient for the use of shipping, and as the means at its disposal will allow, and in the channel of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, and Oregon Slough between said harbor and the lower end of the channel of Oregon Slough and the sea, for such width of channel as it may deem necessary, a depth of water of not less than twenty-five (25) feet at extreme low water, and for a depth as much greater than twenty-five (25) feet as the means at its disposal will allow it to make and maintain, and as may appear to it to be for the best interests of the maritime shipping and commercial interests of the said the port of Portland."

7. Upon recent inquiry, the general manager of the port of Portland states, under letter of May 21, 1915, that he is instructed by the commission to say "that it is its intention to perform the duties required of it by law, although at the present time there is no definite project for the improvement of Oregon Slough."

8. Since the completion of the project there has been practically no increase in the commerce of Oregon Slough. On account of the depression in the lumber business, the large sawmill of the Monarch Lumber Company has not been operated.

9. Without considering the probable greater cost of the maintenance of the improvement above that estimated at the time of the adoption of the project, or the worthiness of making the necessary expenditure in view of the limited commerce of the slough at this time, it is believed that, as the port of Portland has signified its

intention of improving and maintaining the waterway as may be expedient in the future, it will not be necessary for the United States to go to any expense for that purpose, and it is therefore recommended that the project for the improvement of Oregon Slough be abandoned. This recommendation is made in the belief that when the interests desiring the improvement of this waterway can show a necessity for the work it will not be difficult for them to secure its maintenance by the port of Portland. Such a contingency was anticipated in the preliminary examination, as will be shown by the next to last paragraph on page 5 of the printed document referred to.

JAY J. MORROW,
Lieut. Col., Corps of Engineers.

[First indorsement.]

UNITED STATES ENGINEER OFFICE,
NORTHERN PACIFIC DIVISION,
Portland, Oreg., June 8, 1915.

To the CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY:

1. Forwarded.
2. I concur in the views and recommendations of the district officer in above report.

C. H. MCKINSTRY,
Lieut. Col., Corps of Engineers,
Division Engineer.

[For report of the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, see p. 2.]



